**Best Practice – Visual Aid as Consistent Consolidation Tool**

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For my best practice, I used a single visual aid to tie all of my lessons together. The visual aid I used was a giant circle drawn on paper that I posted on the wall. I used the circle to help communicate the overarching idea of how identity-formation in the 1920s, and identity-formation in general, was and is a process of active inclusion and exclusion. The 1920s are often characterized as a time when Canada began to form a true sense of identity. I facilitated a discussion with students on the meaning of identity: what is it, and how do you form it? We boiled it down to the idea that developing identity is about deciding not only what you are, but what you are not. A circle is a great visual aid to understanding this idea of Canadian identity-formation: identities and concepts inside the circle are things considered to be part of ‘Canadian identity’, and people and concepts outside are considered *not* Canadian. The contents of the circle shift and change, as some things are pushed out and others are pulled (or, more commonly, pushed) in. After every lesson, I would ask the students to apply what we learned to the identity circle. I used a combination of pictures and words to represent different concepts, and the students would decide where to place the concept on the ‘identity map’. We also used arrows to show if there was a directional movement.

The following are some examples of lesson concepts that we placed on the map:

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| Elements (connected to lessons) | Location on the map |
| Chinese Canadians | OUTSIDE of the circle. Being pushed out by the Exclusion Act of 1923. |
| Prime Minister Mackenzie King and Arthur Meighen (white, upper-class, English-speaking, etc.) | INSIDE, centre of the map |
| Workers | OUTSIDE pushing in towards the circle via UNIONS. Arthur Meighen pushing against the unions, pushing workers outside the circle. |
| Indigenous children (traditional customs, dress, language) | OUTSIDE, being pulled in by RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS which make them be more Christian, British, etc. |
| Economic sectors: Mining, Pulp and Paper, Agriculture, Automobile Manufacturing, Power Generation | INSIDE the circle. Becoming more important to Canada’s economic development. |
| Britain | INSIDE, moving outward as Canada gains more independence. |
| U.S.A. | OUTSIDE, moving inward as Canada experiences increased American cultural influence through new technologies such as the radio. |

For the unit test, I gave them one question that was simply a big circle, and the students were asked to fill it in and explain the concepts as they related to the development of Canadian identity. The students did an incredible job of remembering all the lessons we learned in class, and they were able to tie all of the concepts together. The circle was a useful visual tool in communicating complex ideas and building connections between lessons in the unit. This could be applied to a number of different concepts, units, and areas of study using a circle, or another large and simple visual cue.